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IN THE CLAIMS

--Claims 13-14 (Cancelled).

15. (Twice Amended) [The] An alkali-metal containing niobate-based piezoelectric sintering material composition [according to claim 13, wherein said] comprising a solid solution [is] represented by a composition formula $\text{Li}_x(\text{K}_{1-y}\text{Na}_y)_{1-x}(\text{Nb}_{1-z}\text{Ta}_z)\text{O}_3$, wherein $x = 0.001$ to 0.2 , $y = 0$ to 0.8 , $z = 0$ to 0.4 , and at least one additive selected from the group consisting of Cu, Li and Ta.

16. (Amended) [The] An alkali metal-containing niobate-based piezoelectric sintering material composition [according to claim 14, wherein said at least one additive is] comprising a solid solution represented by a composition formula $\text{K}_{1-x}\text{Na}_x\text{NbO}_3$, wherein $x = 0$ to 0.8 , and Cu as an additive present in an amount of 0.001 to 5 mol%.

Claims 19-21 (Cancelled)

22. (Amended) [The method according to claim 19] A method for producing an alkali metal-containing niobate-based piezoelectric sintering material composition, comprising:

adding an additive powder containing at least one element selected from the group consisting of Cu, Li and Ta to a powder of niobate represented by formula ANbO_3 , wherein A is an alkali metal, then blending these powders together;

molding said blended powders and sintering the same, and

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treating the resulting sintered substance to impart piezoelectricity thereto,
wherein said additive powder is 0.001 to 5 mol% of Cu, and [said] the blended
powder of a niobate is $K_{1-x}Na_xNbO_3$, wherein $x = 0$ to 0.8.

23. (Amended) [The method according to claim 19] A method for producing an
alkali metal-containing niobate-based piezoelectric sintering material composition,
comprising:

adding an additive powder containing at least one element selected from the group
consisting of Cu, Li and Ta to a powder of niobate represented by formula ANbO₃, wherein
A is an alkali metal, then blending these powders together;

molding said blended powders and sintering the same, and
treating the resulting sintered substance to impart piezoelectricity thereto,
wherein [said] the blended powder of a niobate is $Li_x(K_{1-y}Na_y)_{1-x}(Nb_{1-z}Ta_z)O_3$, wherein
 $x = 0.001$ to 0.2, $y = 0$ to 0.8, $z = 0$ to 0.4.

Claims 25-28 (Cancelled)

Claim 30 (New).--